



ADDRESS

By

MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

**MAJOR GENERAL (Ret'd) THE HONOURABLE
EDMUND DILLON**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE LAUNCH OF THE BEETHAM GARDENS
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Date: Wednesday, 16th November 2015

**Venue: Beetham Gardens Community Centre,
Beetham Gardens, POS**

Time: 12:00 noon

- **Dr. The Honourable Nyan Elizabeth Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Community Development, Culture and Arts;**
- **The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds, Member of Parliament, Laventille West;**
- **The Honourable Adrian Leonce, Member of Parliament, Laventille East-Morvant;**
- **Mr. Stephen Williams, Acting Commissioner of Police and all members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;**
- **Mr. Victor Jones, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development;**
- **Mrs. Vidiah Ramkhelawan, Permanent Secretary, Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and all staff;**
- **Mr. Carl Francis, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security and all staff;**
- **Other Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries;**
- **Dr. Deborah Thomas-Austin – Managing Director, East Port of Spain Development Company and all representatives;**
- **Mr. Vyas Ramphalie – Head, Property Development, NIPDEC and other representatives;**
- **Elders of this community**
- **Community Builders of Beetham Gardens;**
- **Specially invited guests**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

SPEAKING POINTS:

- **Christmas Spirit**
- **Children Singing the National Anthem**

It is with great pleasure, that I accept this opportunity on behalf of the Ministry of National Security, to address you at this launch of the newly constructed Beetham Gardens Community Centre.

From the onset, I would like to relay my gratitude to the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and the Beetham Gardens Organizing Committee for bringing together the many stakeholders who were involved in taking this project from conception to reality.

SPEAKING POINTS:

- Reminisces on the Community Centre in Guapo where I grew up;
- People give life to the centre/structure.

I am aware that this centre, while being constructed served as a space for community gatherings and special intervention programmes and services offered by various Government Ministries, including the Ministry of National Security.

In reality, this facility is already home to the Joint Community Services Centre (JCSC). The JCSC has been providing enhanced security support services to the residents of Beetham Gardens, for quite some time.

I must commend the work done by Mr. Keith Renaud, Director at the Office of Law Enforcement Policy and his staff and more specifically the Making Life Important Unit. They have been influential in conceptualizing such a proactive Social Intervention and Crime Prevention Programme.

The Making Life Important Initiative seeks to foster more cohesive relationships between law enforcement and the community, promoting the effective delivery of policing and other public services programmes. The Joint Community Services Centre (JCSC) is one such Social Intervention.

Its primary aims are to:

1. Provide a permanent security presence in “at risk” areas;
2. Facilitate problem solving through fostering healthy relationships between law enforcement and community members;

3. Complement and support the social intervention initiatives of other Government Ministries as they strive to improve the quality of life of residents, in the long term.

More specifically however, the JCSC was developed in order to function as:

- i. A “One-Stop Shop” for accessing policing and other State-Sponsored services and programmes in the community;
- ii. A symbol of the States’ interest and commitment to improve the socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions of residents;

At the end of the day ladies and gentlemen, what we wish to foster is good community development within all out nation’s communities.

This development must be rooted in the action that helps people to recognize and develop their own ability, to respond to problems and needs which they share. We seek to build communities that control and use the assets available to them, to promote and help improve their quality of life.

It must be stated that when we speak of development, we are not only talking about infrastructural *works*, but what we really mean is true and real development - that is, the development of the people.

Speaking Points:

- **People make the world go around**

In other words, we seek to give our communities and the people who live in them, the ability to reach their full potential for success and thus contribute positively not only to your environment, but to Trinidad and Tobago as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as a responsible Government we are duty bound to put what is needed in place in all our communities, so that the people who live in them can take up the mantle of responsibility for themselves and discover what is their true potential.

We seek to put a lot of emphasis on our country's youth. Our youth are vital to the future development of Trinidad and Tobago. They must be nurtured, listened to, protected and encouraged, given proper guidance and easy access to education and personal development.

Currently we are witnessing an increase in deviant behavior and even violent crimes. As a result, these types of anti-social behaviour must be curtailed by cooperation and collaboration.

How these concerns are dealt with by our Government is manifested in a holistic manner, with the Defence and Protective Services, those involved in the delivery of social services, individuals, families and even communities playing a critical role. It is through this "*Whole of Government Approach*"- these combined efforts, that we could best achieve the goal of reducing crime.

The Ministry of National Security has recommitted itself, to tackling Youth delinquency head-on.

Through the implementation of preventative actions and programmes, we will confront these emerging problems before they become serious and entrenched.

In this regard, the Ministry has been calling upon the public to join forces with us. We need the parents and teachers of our children, as well as the elders of our communities to take up this challenge, so that together we can take the “bull by the horns” and fight our nation’s current crime scourge.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as crime become ubiquitous, so must our national resistance grow against it. The need for more youth focused programmes is fundamental, to allow them the opportunity for viable alternatives to a life of criminal activity.

An integral part of our crime fighting strategy is to provide alternative opportunities for socialisation and training for youths.

In this regard, Government’s approach to solving crime includes, among other things, addressing some of the root causes of crime.

An example of this is the work of the Citizen Security Programme of the Ministry of National Security. The CSP has been contributing to the reduction in crime and violence by addressing the most proximal risk factors—firearms, unsafe neighbourhoods and violent personal behavior in “high needs’ communities.

In this regard, the CSP has been working closely with the residents of its partner communities of St. Barbs, Gonzales, Never Dirty, Morvant, Sogren Trace and the Beetham Gardens.

To date, a range of programmes have been implemented which includes:

- Training in child abuse prevention and domestic violence prevention;
- A Parent Outreach Programme in Beetham Gardens and a Youth Mentorship Initiative in the community of St. Barbs;
- Sport development programmes in Never Dirty and St. Barbs areas; and
- Provision of equipment and uniforms to a Community sporting organization in Beetham Gardens and elsewhere.

In addition, the work of the Police Youth Clubs, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force has been doing yeoman service across Trinidad and Tobago with our country's young persons.

SPEAKING POINTS:

- **The softer approach to crime fighting**

Ladies and Gentlemen, it would be remiss of me if I did not mention a critical issue that must be addressed. The bond between our Law Enforcement Officers and the Communities they serve must be re-established.

I know that in the recent past, a lot of work has been done by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, to reengineer this relationship.

In this community where trust for law enforcement is sometimes a bit low, I am informed that residents now regularly contact the Joint Community Services Centre, seeking solutions to the problems they may be facing. They now take advantage of the myriad services offered and regularly report domestic and other incidents to the police.

In this same vein, we must seek to encourage and nurture that symbiotic relationship between the uniform and the civilian - a relationship once reconnected, can only redound to the benefit of the safety and security of our communities.

Our intent therefore is to rebuild the trust and collaboration between the country's law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve, which will allow them to work together more closely, to identify and solve community problems and challenges.

The Law Enforcement officer must not be seen solely as the guardian of law and order, but also as a partner, an active ally in the effort to enhance the safety and quality of the neighbourhood.

SPEAKING POINTS:

- **A Friend, a father, a brother, a sister**

But I am here to inform you, that we can reclaim our neighbourhoods, our streets, our communities and our country from those criminal elements who seek to carry Trinidad and Tobago into an abyss.

We simply cannot continue to allow criminal forces to wreak havoc in the streets of our cities and in the back roads of our rural villages. We must take the necessary steps to begin the process of emancipating ourselves from the clutches of criminals.

In closing, I would like to leave you with these thoughts, that if we are to reclaim our young men and women, the Government must share in a concerted effort with the major social intuitions that exist within society.

The “Whole of Government Approach” must be accepted and implemented. This Government intends to do just that.

All of us would like to see our children live and contribute meaningfully to the development of Trinidad and Tobago. We want our children to leave positive legacies for their children. We want our children to prosper with success, to emerge as beacons in their respective communities.

It must be the responsibility of every citizen, every religious institution, every school and every parent to recognise that they have the power to turn things around. We must ensure that we provide the proper leadership for our young men and women. We must not shirk this responsibility.

SPEAKING POINTS:

- **Community Centre provides this opportunity.**

Once again, congratulations on your new Community Centre.

I thank you.